Family Accepts $1 Million In Death of CIA Biochemist

12/19/75

By B. D. Colen
Washington Post Staff Writer

The family of a civilian biochemist who died in 1953 following his participation in a CIA drug experiment has agreed to drop all claims against the government in return for a payment of $1.25 million and the release of all CIA files concerning the case.

The attorney for the family of the late Dr. Frank R. Olson issued a statement yesterday for Olson's widow and three grown children in which the family said it has been "assured by the administration that all of the agencies concerned, including the Department of Justice and the CIA, fully support (legislation to provide the money) as a fairly arrived at settlement of our claim . . ."

Olson plunged to his death from a 10th floor New York hotel window about a week after being given LSD as part of a CIA experiment without his knowledge. His family was never told the cause of his death,d was paid $150,000 in death benefits over the 22 years.

A spokesman for Sen. Charles McC. Mathias Jr. (R-Md.) said yesterday that Mathias, Sen. J. Glen Beall Jr. (R-Md.) and Rep. Goodloe Byron (D-Md.) plan to introduce a private bill after the Christmas recess to provide the compensation to the Olson family.

Mrs. Olson recently and her husband in early '50s.

The settlement calls for the money to be divided equally among Olson's widow, Alice, two sons, Eric and Nils and daughter, Lisa.

Attorney David Rudovsky refused to say how much he will be paid, other than to say that the bill will limit attorneys' compensation to 10 per cent of the settlement. The family's portion of the money will be tax free, Rudovsky said.

In its statement the Olson family said it had originally sought to "institute legal proceedings aimed at obtaining:

—Monetary damages for (Frank Olson's) wrongful death and for the following 22 years of governmental deceit and misrepresentation;

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—Full disclosure of the circumstances surrounding the death of Frank Olson;

—Formal acknowledgement from the United States government that the drug experimentation practiced by the CIA was illegal and unconscionable.

"At the same time," the Olsons said in their statement, "we sought to find a way to express our outrage over the CIA's actions. The disclosure of the true facts concerning Frank Olson's death and the CIA cover-up was, to put it simply, staggering to us, and, judging from the public response, to the American people as well. We intended, therefore, that the steps we took in this case would help us to focus public concern upon the political and moral issues surrounding the activities of the CIA."

For 22 years the Olsons had no real idea why Frank Olson, a usually happy, outgoing and loving father, plunged through a closed 10th story hotel window on Nov. 28, 1953.

For 22 years the Olsons had refused to believe that Frank Olson had simply committed suicide, and had wondered what really caused his death. Last June 11, when Alice Olson read the Rockefeller report on CIA activities, she began to understand.

In the report Mrs. Olson read that "on one occasion during the early phases of this (drug experiment program) (in 1953), LSD was administered to an employee of the Department of the Army without his knowledge while he was attending a meeting with CIA personnel working on the drug project . . . He developed some serious side effects and was sent to New York with a CIA escort for psychiatric treatment. Several days later, he jumped from a tenth floor window of his room and died as a result."

Mrs. Olson knew her husband had acted moody and withdrawn during the last week of his life. And she knew that the last time his family saw him, Frank Olson was being driven away in a CIA-supplied car. When she then spoke to Olson's former boss, Col. Vincent Ruwet (USA-ret.), Alice Olson learned that her husband was the man mentioned in the Rockefeller report.

The Olson family held a press conference to tell the story of Frank Olson and the CIA's role in his death.

After the revelations by the Olsons, news articles reported that thousands of persons, both knowingly and unwittingly, had been participants in CIA and armed forces experiments with hallucinogenics and other drugs.

The Olsons had originally said they were going to file a multi-million dollar suit against the government in the hope of collecting damages for Olson's death and in the hope of revealing more about the CIA's drug experiments.

Rudovsky said the family decided to settle the suit because they succeeded in eliciting an acknowledgement that the experiments were "illegal and unconscionable" during a meeting with President Ford and then CIA Director William Colby, because the family and the government agreed to release the information and because litigation would be long, costly and might, ultimately, fail.

In his statement yesterday Sen. Mathias said "we cannot erase the years which (the Olsons) have endured under the cloud for which government agencies have a clear responsibility. We can, however, show that our government is capable of admitting its own injustices and taking steps to right the wrongs for which its own officials are to blame."

Sen. Beall said that ". . . the willingness of the Administration (to agree to the settlement) will do much to eradicate the stain of tragedy and to insure that no other American family is ever again victimized by thoughtless acts and calculated duplicity on the part of its own government."

Siamese Twins May Be Separated

WICHITA, Kan., Dec. 17 (AP)—The surgical separation of Siamese twin girls—born Nov. 7 at a Wichita hospital—may be accomplished within a few weeks because they are doing well, a consultant surgeon says.

Dr. Robert Filler, a thoracic surgeon and chief of clinical surgery at Children's Hospital Medical Center in Boston, said Tuesday the surgery to separate the twins should not be complicated.

Hospital officials said it is possible the twins share a portion of a single liver, but Filler said this would not present serious problems during the separation.

Youth Is Found Frozen to Death

MEMPHIS, Tenn., Dec. 18 (AP)—The body of a 12-year-old boy was found on a railroad flatcar here, and police said he apparently hopped a freight train near his Chicago home and froze to death as sub-freezing winds whipped the flatcar.

Illinois Central-Gulf railway workers found the boy's body on the train Wednesday morning, his arms wrapped around his head as though he had been making an attempt to keep warm, police said.